THE

HUBBUB;

OR, THE

HISTORY OF FARMER RUSSEL,

THE HARD-HEARTED OVERSEER.

PHILADELPHIA:

PRINTED BY B. & J. JOHNSON, NO. 147, HIGH-STREET.

1800.

THE HUBBUB, &c.

THE oldeſt man living at Compton-Aſhby, cannot call to mind ch another Hubbub as that which ppened there ſome months ago, on e common, juſt before the poor-uſe door. A number of men, wo-en, and children, had formed a ring und one farmer Ruſſel, a ſullen, wn looking fellow, whom no one ved, and every one feared: for his ve of money had led him to be hard-arted, and his power over the poor

had made him infolent. Never was there ſuch a hiſſing and hooting, and hallooing heard. Many of theſe people had been grievouſly oppreſſed by the farmer, and now they had him in their power, they ſeemed reſolved to ſhew him little mercy.

Betty Jobbins beat the frying-pan with the key of the door, Sally Gore pounded the peſtle and mortar, Nell Shepſton rung the warming pan, Dick Devonſhire blew the Ram's-horn whilſt Nick Stafford and others gin gled the ſheep's bells.

It ſo happened that one Mr. Brit ton rode up at the inſtant to enquire what was the matter, of two poor women who were ſitting in the porch of the poor-houſe. One of them Amy Talbot, ſeemed to be about fif ty years of age, but time had not cau red Amy of goſſiping, or taught her

o mend her cloaths. As ſhe had no urn for induſtry in her youth, ſhe oon eat, and drank up the little pro- erty left her by her parents, which ight now have afforded her a com- ortable maintenance; but no, Amy's ongue was always abuſive and al- ays buſy, whilſt her fingers were eldom employed. Wherever there as a goſſiping in the pariſh, thither an Amy with her rags flying about er, like a ſcare-crow in a cherry tree. er ſkin, which was quite tawny, as never waſhed; her hair had work- itſelf through the holes of her ob, half the border of which was ſt, and the flaps of it were always ving behind her; the pigs had one y eaten a hole through her hat as lay on the ground, and a piece of now hung over her eye like a black tch, her petticoats were all tatters, d her gown reached but little below r knees; it had been torn away bit

by bit, till it was ravelled out to th
above dimenſions; her ſtockings ha
no feet, and her feet were ſlipped in
to a miſerable pair of ſhoes, whic
ſhe had not taken the trouble to dra
up at heel, even when they were new
in one hand ſhe clenched her rag
together, whilſt with the other, ſh
held a ſhort pipe in her mouth reſ
ing her elbow on her knee, as ſhe ſa
croſs legged.

The other poor woman whoſ
name was Apſley, was of a very di
ferent caſt from Amy; ſhe was th
picture of cleanlineſs, and good houſe
wifery; ſhe was mending her apro
which though very coarſe, was a
white as the driven ſnow; this goo
woman never ſat at the door to tak
the air, but ſhe was doing ſomethin
"it is a duty," ſhe would ſay, "
turn our time to the beſt account w

can," and when her other employment was over she would read a chapter in her Bible. Mr. Britton asked her what occasioned the uproar, and at the same time slipped half a crown into her hand, giving afterwards a few halfpence to Amy, which he thought was more than such a dirty woman deserved.

"Why, sir," cried Amy pocketing her pence, "I'll tell you all how and about it; don't you see that sulky ill-looking fellow of a farmer so hooted at by the people? he is a fine rare crusty old blade, and has hectored over the parish at a fine rate; he is always at law with the Parson about tithes, and with his neighbours upon the slightest provocation; besides, Sir, he is Overseer of the poor, and a poor time we have had on't, but thanks be praised, 'tis come home to the wretch at last," then she fell to hooting and

hiſſing, till ſhe foamed at the mouth again; which having wiped off with the corner of her gown, ſhe ſaid "now, Sir, I'll tell you: that fellow's ſtomach has been well filled with every thing of the beſt, whilſt he has ſtarved poor we almoſt to death, but 'tis likely to come home to him at laſt, and he may chance to ſwing for it, and then we ſhall all be revenged of him," and again ſhe fell to clapping her hands.

"Prithee Amy;" replied dame Apſley very calmly, "don't give way to ſuch evil tempers; we have been harſhly uſed by the farmer to be ſure, but if we are chriſtians, we muſt learn to forget and forgive," "If ever I forgive the villain," cried Amy, knocking the duſt out of her pipe, "may I never get another quartern of tobacco; revenge is ſweet, Sir, revenge is ſweet."

" To an unchriſtian temper I grant
is," ſaid Mr. Britton, " but revenge
the worſt paſſion that can enter
e human breaſt, it is the very ſpirit
Satan."

" It is a very fine remark truly,
ir," ſaid dame Apſley, " for to my
inking, a man who is always nur-
ng up an evil paſſion in his boſom,
as if he cheriſhed a ſerpent there,
hich muſt ſting him to death at laſt;
t, Sir, I muſt be bold to ſay, much
I want money, I would not accept
farmer Ruſſel's fortune, if I muſt
ke up the heavy burden of his
imes into the bargain." Ah! dame,
ne," interrupted Amy, " preach
you pleaſe, I am glad at heart 'tis
me home to the villain at laſt, things
n't go on worſe with us."

" Nor perhaps much better," an-
ered dame Apſley, " for, after all,

'tis a very unthankful office to hav
much to do with poor people, eſpec
ally if they have not the fear of Go
before their eyes; becauſe then the
are abuſive and ungrateful to tho
who are guardians over them; for t
matter of that, Amy, have we n
ſeveral old people in this poor hou
who have been drunken, idle, bla
pheming people all their lives: a
though we live ſo near to the churc
not one of them has ſeen the inſi
of it for many years paſt, unleſs wh
there has been Chriſtmas gifts, or m
ney to be given away; but I think i
were the parſon, Amy, every Lor
day I would drive the whole poſſe i
to church before me, if they we
able to ſet one foot before anothe
"My good woman," ſaid Mr. B
ton, "I am mightily pleaſed to
how uſefully you employ your ti
for you have continued your w

ever ſince we have been chatting together." "Time, Sir, is the gift of God, and I muſt account to him for it; beſides, Sir, often when I am buſily employed at my needle, I can ponder on ſome text of Scripture; and I can ſay with King David, "As for me, when I am poor and in heavineſs, thy help, O God, ſhall lift me up." Now, Sir, although I am very poor, that is no reaſon why I ſhould not be very clean; if my cloathing be coarſe, that is no excuſe for its being ragged, and if I am lame in my feet, that is no cauſe for my fingers being idle; beſides, Sir, a ſtitch in time ſaves nine, and I frequently get a ſhilling by mending ſtays, or quilting of ſervants' petticoats, when my health will permit."

"Ah! well," interrupted Amy, I never had the heart to work, un-

leſs I were better paid for it. But I ſay dame; I will ſay, that I am glad at heart farmer Ruſſel is in hold at laſt; "live, and let live," is my notion of the thing; but no, he went on from day to day, cribbing and ſcraping ſomething out of every body; and no ſooner did he get a little uppiſh in the world, than he took no more account of poor we, than if we had been ſo many hedge-hogs, for all he was born and bred amongſt us; but for the matter of that, he hath been much kinder to his own family; for you muſt know, Sir, his bitter temper cauſed his only ſon to run away from him, nor has any tale or tidings ever been heard of him." Here again Ammy began hiſſing and hooting the farmer, inſomuch, that Mr. Britton began to think he ſhould never get at the end of the ſtory.

"Now, Sir," cried Amy at laſt, whilſt ſhe filled her pipe, "now I have got breath again, I'll tell you all how and about it. You muſt know laſt hard winter, Sir, when bread was ſo dear, and coals were ſo ſcarce, farmer Ruſſel would not let the pariſh be at the expence of mending the thatch on our houſe, ſo that when the ſnow melted, it ran in ſtreams down on dame's bed, by which ſhe loſt the uſe of her limbs, and ſhe has hobbled with crutches ever ſince: yet ſhe, fooliſh woman, ſeldom complains; but off ſhe goes to her Bible for comfort, as another body would to a glaſs of gin, or pot of beer, when things go amiſs."

"The troubles of life," ſaid Dame Applley, "are but as ſhadows which paſs away; but the chriſtian's reſt will be eternal; and certain I am, Sir, my weak nature would often have given way to ſinful murmurings, but

for the gracious promiſe of better things in the life to come." O! Sir," continued ſhe, "I have found it much more for my ſoul's good to bleſs Heaven for what I have, than to murmur for what I have not; though, to be ſure, I have ſeen better days," wiping her eyes with the corner of her apron.

"Indeed has ſhe, Sir," cried Amy, "for dame's huſband was a man well to paſs in the world; he rented a ſmall farm, and was accounted one of the moſt induſtrious men in the country; and as to dame herſelf, up early and down late was her maxim when all of a ſudden comes that knaviſh ſcoundrel there, farmer Ruſſel, and takes farmer Apſley's eſtate over his head, who was ſoon after obliged to take up with day-labouring to maintain his family: by-and-by ſickneſs came on

want followed next, farmer Ruſſel ſeized farmer Apſley's goods for a little debt, and at the end of a long fit of ſickneſs, he and his whole family were brought here to the poor-houſe, where the man ſoon after died of a broken heart; and yet, Sir, dame is for forgiving the farmer all this."

"That I do," replied ſhe, "ſince my bleſſed Saviour not only forgave his enemies; but prayed to his Heavenly Father to forgive them alſo; and I ſhould read my Bible to little profit, Amy, if I learnt nothing from ſo bright an example; but, good Sir," ſaid ſhe, turning to Mr. Britton, "your patience muſt be quite tired, not to be yet made acquainted with all the Hubbub yonder; but moſt folks are ſo fond of telling their own ſtories, that they do not think of other people. There is, Sir, a poor ſoldier found

dead this morning in the next parish, and it is thought that farmer Ruffel has had some concern in the matter, so the people are now going to carry him before a justice to be examined."

"And I hope he will be hanged, I hope he will be hanged," cried Amy, clapping her hands,"—"and I hope he will live to repent," cried dame Apsley, wiping her eyes. Mr. Britton's curiosity was now raised, and he attended the mob to the justice's.

Justice Carter was an upright gentleman, just such a man as a justice of the peace ought to be. Before he administered an oath to an ignorant person; "Think a moment, my friend," he would say, "before you kiss this book, whether you can stand to the truth of what you are going to swear when you are called to be judged for

it, before the God of Heaven and earth." No temptation could ever prevail on his worſhip unjuſtly to favour any man: the laws, he ſaid, muſt take their courſe; if they were found ſevere, he did not make them: it was his duty to adminiſter them.

"And, pleaſe your worſhip," cried one Jones, who ſeemed to be the ring-leader of the mob," "we all hope that you will now take revenge for us on the farmer, for all the ſpiteful tricks he has played us."

"I ſhould make but an ill uſe of power, Jones" replied the juſtice, "if I were to do any thing from heat or paſſion; if the law acquits farmer Ruſſel, I ſhall readily diſmiſs him."

"Well, to be ſure," cried the people all in a breath, "your Worſhip

muſt be a very fine Chriſtian to forget and forgive at this rate, for to our certain knowledge the farmer has been a plague to you yourſelf theſe ten years, ſneering at you many times, and ſaying, that neither you nor the law could take hold of him." "Now, do not you ſee," "replied the juſtice," "that all that has nothing to do with the preſent matter?"

Then turning over a great book as big as a church bible, the witneſs was called, who depoſed upon oath, that the laſt evening juſt between light and dark, he ſaw farmer Ruſſel dragging a poor ſoldier-like looking man over Compton bridge, clear out of his own pariſh into the next, that he there laid him down by the ſide of the ditch; that at firſt he, the witneſs, believed the man to be dead; but that in a ſhort time he found the poor fellow had only fainted through weakneſs;

that the witneſs had lent the poor ſoldier all the aſſiſtance in his power; but that he was obliged ſoon after to follow his cattle.

Here the witneſs's evidence cloſed. "And could you," ſaid the juſtice to farmer Ruſſel, "drag a poor dying traveller out of your pariſh in this barbarous manner? In order to ſave your own pariſh a trifling expence, you did not ſcruple to riſk the life of this poor traveller. You thought indeed, that the darkneſs concealed you; but remember, though it ſeemed dark, yet the broad eye of the Almighty was upon you.

The farmer then in a ſurly tone replied, that the man had no buſineſs in his pariſh, and that as for himſelf, no one could ſay he was unkind to the poor, for he paid three times as

much to the poor-rates as any man in the pariſh, (the lord of the manor only excepted) " And reaſon good," cried ragged Amy," who had follow-ed the mob; " becauſe you are the greateſt renter in it; for by diſhoneſt practices you have got all the ſmall farms into your own hands; but far-mer; no one has heard you ever gave a penny out of your own pocket to the poor when the laws did not com-pel you, ſo no thanks for your cha-rity. And pleaſe your Worſhip, eve-very one here knows, that whenev-a kind gentleman and lady ſent a few ſhillings to be divided amongſt us, if the farmer heard of it he would ſto-our pay till it was gone."

Both the Juſtice and Mr. Britto-quite ſhuddered at this act of cruelty and every one preſent hoped his Wo-ſhip would not fail to take ample re-venge on the farmer.

"My friends," said the Justice again, "if my breast harboured revenge against any man, I should be unfit for a magistrate; did you never see the picture of Justice painted in my great hall? she is there represented as holding a pair of scales with the balance quite even."

The Justice wishing to know some more circumstances about the man's death, the whole posse now moved off to the place where the corpse lay, attended by Mr. Britton; by the way they accused the farmer of every crime; some of which he had not, and others which he had committed. "Ah!" said one, "who sold cider for the very best, when it was proved it had been half filled up with water?" "Who," said another, sold his hay-ricks, all warranted good, and when they were cut open

they were found crammed with musty stuff, fit only for littering cattle?" "And who," cried a third, "carried the best samples of wheat to the market, and afterwards fobbed the buyer off with the very worst?" "And who," bawled out a fourth, "turned his own child out of doors, and mayhap murdered him, for no tidings have been heard of him since?"

Much after this manner they went on, and soon after the coroner pronounced a verdict of *natural death*, no marks of violence being found upon the body. The farmer now brightened up at once, and, sticking his hands in his waistcoat pockets, he cast a malignant grin of triumph on all around him; "Now touch me if you dare," cried he, "but if my name be Russel, I'll have my revenge of every man and woman's child of you

and I'll lay an action againſt you, John Hoſkins, for defamation; you have accuſed me with the murder of my own child; now prove your words if you can." Poor Hoſkins turned as pale as death, well knowing the farmer's unforgiving temper.

Here ſome one ſearching the pockets of the deceaſed, was ſurprized to find in them a letter not ſealed, directed to farmer Ruſſel, of Compton Aſhby. The letter was offered to the farmer, but he refuſed to take it, having always thought it unlucky to touch any thing belonging to the dead. For the cruel are naturally ſuperſtitious. The people then requeſted Mr. Britton to read it aloud, which he at length conſented to do.

LETTER.

" Honoured Father,

" THIS comes to you, from your ever dutiful, but unfortunate ſon, JAMES RUSSEL."

Here the ſhouts of the people were ſo clamorous, that Mr. Britton could not go on reading; every one preſſed round the body, and after examining the face for a moment, they one and all cried out in a breath, " 'Tis Jemmy Ruſſel, 'tis Jemmy Ruſſel, as ſure as eggs are eggs; we can't be miſtaken by the cut acroſs his right eye. O, you hard hearted wretch!" ſaid Hoſkins, ſhaking his clenched fiſt at the farmer, (who gave a deep groan and turned as white as a ſheet,) " wil

you have the law of me now, becauſe I ſaid you killed your ſon, you cruel monſter?" Mr. Britton here interfered, and ſaid, let me adviſe you good folks to hear the letter read through and ſtop your tongues a moment."

"My dear father, I have faithfully ſerved his Majeſty King George in his wars for many years; but falling into the ſame diſorder of which my poor mother died, the conſumption; my commanding officer who has behaved like a father to me, has kindly granted me a furlow, to try what my native air will do for me, giving me at the ſame time a golden guinea out of his own pocket to bear my expences on the road, he having always taken a great fancy to me, ſeeing as how, I ever made it my delight to obey him. So I began my march homeward, although with great fear and trembling, pondering in my mind

the laſt words I ever heard you ſpeak; which were, 'That you wiſhed I might drop down dead if I ever dared to darken your doors again;' and calling down heavy curſes on yourſelf if ever you forgave me; and now, as my offence, dear father, was but a ſlight, one, and much have I repented of it, and much ſhall we all have to be forgiven when we ſhall appear before God in judgement, ſo I humbly truſt you will receive me kindly when you ſee how ſick, and how very weak I am. I have fallen down once or twice on the road, and having ſpent all my money, have been for two days living by charity. I therefore write theſe few lines from the Swan at Bridgewater, where I have ſtopped, in order that they may, in caſe I ſhould not be able to reach home alive, be ſent to you after my death. Oh, my dear father! my hour glaſs is almoſt run, and death will now be welcome to me,

for my life has been little elſe than pain and ſorrow. O! father, nothing becomes a chriſtian-man like ſorrow for ſin, even when he is found in health, and his worldly concerns flouriſhing round him. Pray, dear father, think of theſe things. Although this life is nearly over with me, yet I have a comfortable hope and truſt in my Saviour that the joys of the next will ſoon open upon me.

" Farewell, for ever, my dear and honoured father: ſhould we meet no more in this world, I humbly pray we may meet in the next. I beg pardon for all my faults, and with my dying breath ſubſcribe myſelf, your ever dutiful ſon,

JAMES RUSSEL."

Many tears were ſhed whilſt Mr.

Britton read the letter. "My good friends," ſaid he, when he had finiſhed it, "let me now give you a word of advice: Whenever a ſick and poor traveller, (and eſpecially when a brave ſoldier or ſailor, who has ſhed his blood in fighting for you in foreign parts, and is perhaps eſcaped from an enemy's priſon,) knocks at your door to aſk for charity, do not refuſe him a cup of beer, or a plentiful ſlice of bread and cheeſe: to you who abound it is little, to him it may be much; and henceforward let us all learn to look upon every man in diſtreſs as a child or a brother; and let us do by him as we would wiſh to be done by, if we were in his condition. As for you, farmer Ruſſel," continued he, "no reproof from me is wanting, for the event that has happened is of itſelf the moſt bitter of all reproofs."

O my ſon! my ſon!" at length cried the farmer, wringing his hands, and tearing his hair with grief, " my own curſes have brought on my own deſtruction! Wretch! wretch that I am," here attempting to riſe, he ſunk down by the body of his ſon, and then fell into ſuch ſtrong convulſion fits, that ſix of the ſtouteſt men preſent could not hold him: his limbs were diſtorted, his face turned black, his eyes looked as if they were burſting out of his head; ſo dreadful indeed was his ſituation, that thoſe who but a moment before hated and reviled him, were now ready to pity him. " What an affecting ſight," ſaid Mr. Britton " have we now before us! God grant that it may prove a leſſon to us all. It was but a few moments ago that this miſerable man, who now lies ſtruggling in the toils of death before you, was proudly rejoi-

cing that he had eſcaped the laſh o
the law."

The farmer's waggon now arrive
to carry him home, and it was a mo
moving ſight, to ſee it followed b
the corpſe of his ſon. A doctor wa
ſent for, who the moment he ſaw th
farmer, ſaid he feared he could do n
thing for him. Mr. Britton watche
by him all night, and when the fi
went off for a few minutes, he wa
heard thus to mutter to himſelf.

" Of what uſe to me are all th
riches in the world, now the afflictin
hand of Heaven is upon me? M
puniſhment is great, great alſo ha
been my crime.—I ſuffered my ow
child to periſh for want, whilſt I wa
in plenty, and now my own hand ha
helped to kill him; how hard have
been to the poor; the Lord ha

mitten me for it! The curſes I have often uttered againſt them are now come upon myſelf. I muſt die! The jaws of Hell ſeem opening to devour me!"

After this the farmer uttered nothing to be underſtood, though he anguiſhed near three weeks in a ſtate of miſery which excited the pity of all who ſaw him, and then expired, a dreadful inſtance of the juſt judgment of God.

S.

THE LADY AND THE PYE.

A WORTHY Squire of ſober life,
Had a conceited boaſting wife;
Of *him* ſhe daily made complaint;
Herſelf ſhe thought a very ſaint.
She lov'd to load mankind with blame,
And on their errors build her fame.
Her favourite ſubject of diſpute
Was Eve and the forbidden fruit.
"Had I been Eve," ſhe often cried,
"Man had not fall'n, nor woman died
I ſtill had kept the orders given,
Nor for an apple loſt my heaven;
To gratify my curious mind
I ne'er had ruin'd all mankind;

lor from a vain desire to know,
ntail'd on all my race such woe."

The Squire reply'd, " I fear 'tis true,
he same ill spirit lives in you;
empted alike, I dare believe,
ou would have disobey'd like Eve."
he lady storm'd and still deny'd
oth curiosity and pride.

The Squire some future day at dinner,
esolv'd to try this boastful sinner;
e griev'd such vanity possest her,
nd thus in serious terms address'd her:
Madam, the usual splendid feast
ith which our wedding day is grac'd,
ith you I must not share to-day,
r business summons me away.
f all the dainties I've prepar'd,
beg not any may be spar'd;
dulge in every costly dish;
njoy, 'tis what I really wish;
nly observe one prohibition,
or think it a severe condition;
n one small dish which cover'd stands,
ou must not dare to lay your hands;
o—disobey not on your life,
henceforth you're no more my wife."

The treat was ſerv'd, the Squire was
gone,
The murm'ring lady din'd alone:
She ſaw what'er could grace a feaſt,
Or charm the eye, or pleaſe the taſte;
But while ſhe rang'd from this to that,
From ven'ſon haunch to turtle fat;
On one ſmall diſh ſhe chanc'd to light,
By a deep cover hid from ſight:
" O! here it is—yet not for me!
I muſt not taſte, nay dare not ſee;
Why place it there? or why forbid
That I ſo much as lift the lid?
Prohibited of this to eat,
I care not for the ſumptuous treat;
I wonder if 'tis fowl or fiſh,
To know what's there I merely wiſh.
I'll look O no, I loſe for ever,
If I'm betray'd my huſband's favour.
I own I think it vaſtly hard,
Nay, tyranny, to be debarr'd.
John you may go—the wine's decanted
I'll ring or call you when you're wanted
Now left alone, ſhe waits no longer,
Temptation preſſes more and ſtronger
" I'll peep—the harm can ne'er be much
For tho' I peep, I will not touch;

hy I'm forbid to lift this cover
ne glance will tell, and then 'tis over.
y huſband's abſent, ſo is John,
y peeping never can be known."
embling ſhe yielded to her wiſh,
d rais'd the cover from the diſh:
e ſtarts—for lo! an open pye
om which ſix living ſparrows fly.
e calls, ſhe ſcreams, with wild ſurpriſe,
Haſte John and catch theſe birds," ſhe
cries;
n hears not, but to crown her ſhame,
at her call her huſband came.
rnly he frown'd as thus he ſpoke,
hus is your vow'd allegiance broke!
f-ign'rance led you to believe
u did not ſhare the ſin of Eve.
e her's how bleſt was your condition!
w ſmall my gentle prohibition!
t you, tho' fed with every dainty,
pining in the midſt of plenty;
is diſh thus ſingled from the reſt,
your obedience was the teſt;
r mind, unbroke by ſelf-denial,
ld not ſuſtain this ſlender trial.
mility from hence be taught,
rn candour to another's fault;

Go know, like Eve, from this ſad din-
ner,
You're both a vain and curious ſinner.

Z.

☞ Next week will be publiſhed the Valley of Tears a viſion.